

I recall M/Sgt Sterling ---

That would be, by the time I got to the Barracks in 1961, "Pop" Sterling. I vividly remember the first working party I was assigned to and told to report to Pop Sterling in the basement maintenance office. Here was a rather short, longhaired, somewhat disheveled master sergeant wearing greasy utilities with the old ankle length boondockers. When I kept calling him, "Sir", he finally became exasperated enough to tell me to, "knock that s**t off. Call me Pop." He then told me to go topside, get in the truck waiting out back and go to the White House.

Damn, my first working party and already I'm in the big time and am going to the White House. Perhaps President or Mrs. Kennedy will have time for a brief chat with a Marine PFC --- Maybe some head of state will want to interview a real Marine... These and other wonderfully self-important thoughts ran through my mind as we headed for the White House. Well, so much for grand ideas. The only thing grand was the piano we had to roll from one room to another. No President . . . No First Lady . . . Nothing but good old manual labor and then back to the Barracks.

I believe Pop had been at 8th & I longer than anyone because, as a much younger Marine he was in charge of maintenance when there was a major renovation. The story was that he sorta-kinda "lost" the blueprints after the work was done, but remembered where the various "runs" were and where they went, thereby becoming an indispensable fixture at the Barracks. I did hear that sometime in the mid to late 60's he retired.

Bob Manchester (1961-63)